

REMARKS

By the present response, Applicant has amended claims 1, 5, 8, 12, 19 and 23 to further clarify the invention. Claims 1-29 are pending in this application. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

In the Office Action, claims 1-14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated over U.S. Publication No. 2004/0133793 (Ginter et al). Claims 15-18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ginter et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,757,643 (Kurodo et al.). The Examiner states claims 16-18 are further rejected under Ginter et al. as provided under the §102(e) rejections and that claims 19-29 directed to substantially similar subject matter are rejected as above.

35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejections

Claims 1-14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Ginter et al. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

Ginter et al. discloses secure transaction management and electronic rights protection where electronic appliances such as computers help to ensure that information is accessed and used only in authorized ways, and to maintain the integrity, availability, and/or confidentiality of the information. These electronic appliances provide a distributed virtual distribution environment (VDE) that may enforce a secure chain of handling and control, for example, to control and/or meter or otherwise monitor use of electronically stored or disseminated

information. Such a virtual distribution environment may be used to protect rights of various participants in electronic commerce and other electronic or electronic-facilitated transactions.

Regarding claims 1 and 8, Applicant submits that Ginter et al. does not disclose or suggest the limitations in the combination of each of these claims. For example, the Examiner asserts that Ginter et al, discloses receiving information on a use of the appliance through a communication network, calculating a charge for the use of the appliance based on the received use information, and transmitting the calculated charge to a user's terminal through the communication network, in paragraphs 1835, 1866-1868, and 0222. Applicant submits that these are improper § 102 rejections in that the Examiner fails to specifically identify where in the cited references each and every limitation is allegedly disclosed or suggested. The Examiner merely cites multiple paragraphs as disclosing all the limitations in these claims of the present application. The Examiner fails to specifically point out which portions of Ginter et al. the Examiner asserts discloses "the appliance", "the communication network", "calculating a charge for use of the appliance", "use information", "calculated charge", etc., as recited in the claims of the present application.

Moreover, these portions of Ginter et al. do not disclose or suggest these limitations in the claims of the present application. Ginter et al. is related to techniques for secure transmission management and helping to ensure that information is accessed and/or otherwise used in authorized ways, and maintaining the integrity, availability and/or confidentiality of such information. Ginter et al. is not directed at all to managing use of a rental home appliance as

recited in the claims of the present application. Ginter et al. does not disclose or suggest receiving information on a use of the rental home appliance through a communication network, calculating a charge for the use of the rental home appliance based on the received used information, or transmitting the calculated charge to a users terminal through the communication network, as recited in the claims of the present application. Ginter et al. is merely directed to electronic appliances such as computers that help to ensure that information is accessed only in authorized ways, and maintaining the integrity, availability, and/or confidentiality of the information.

Moreover, Ginter et al. does not disclose or suggest transmitting a start signal for a rental home appliance identified by a subscriber number from the server through the communication network to a corresponding subscriber's terminal if the subscriber number is authenticated successfully. These limitations are neither disclose nor suggested by Ginter et al.

Regarding claims 2-7 and 9-14, Applicant submits that these claims are dependent on one of independent claim 1 and 8 and, therefore, are patentable at least for the same reasons noted previously regarding these independent claims.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that Ginter et al. does not disclose or suggest the limitations in the combination of each of claims 1-14 of the present application. Applicant respectfully requests that these rejections be withdrawn and that these claims be allowed.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

Claims 15-18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ginter et al. in view of Kurodo et al. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

Kurodo et al. discloses a remote management system where data detected by a sensor for detecting a condition of a machine is input from an input port of an interface unit of a control unit such as a microcomputer. The interface unit is connected via a data transmission controller over a communication line with a central control apparatus which manages a machine like a washing machine from remote. The detected data transmitted from the interface unit to the central control apparatus through the control unit is inapplicable to communication, while the interface unit passes the detected data of the sensor without processing and outputs the detected data to the control unit by means of setting the state of an output port thereof same as that of the input port.

Regarding claim 15, Applicant submits that none of the cited references, taken alone or in any proper combination, disclose suggest or render obvious the limitations in the combination of this claim of, *inter alia*, managing use of a washing machine through a communication network that includes receiving information on washing condition program settings based on clothes inserted in the washing machine through the communication network, calculating a charge for use of the washing machine based on the received information, transmitting the calculated charge to a user's terminal through the communication network, or transmitting a start signal to the washing machine through the communication network if a washing request is received.

Again, the Examiner issues an improper rejection in that the Examiner fails to specifically point out where each and every limitation in the claims of the present application are allegedly disclosed or suggested by the cited reference. Regarding claims 15, the Examiner merely states “see rejection above”. However, as noted previously, Ginter et al. does not disclose or suggest managing use of a rental home appliance or managing use of a washing machine through a communication network. As noted previously, Ginter et al. is related to secure transaction management and electronic rights protection. Ginter does not disclose or suggest receiving information on washing condition program settings based on clothes inserted in the washing machine through the communication network, or calculating a charge for use of the washing machine based on the received information. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner specifically point out where in the cited references each of these limitations in the claims of the present application are allegedly disclosed or suggested.

The Examiner admits that Ginter et al. does not disclose or suggest a sensor mechanism that is specific to conditions based on clothes inserted in a washing machine, but asserts that Kurodo et al. discloses these limitations in the abstract, col. 3, line 45-col. 4, line 54. However, these portions merely disclose that a microprocessor starts a drying or washing operation in accordance with a charge input command such as coin entry and a start command, controls machine operation in accordance with signals from sensors such as a rotation speed sensor and temperature sensor, and transmits data regarding charge input, start command, rotation speed, temperature, etc. and trouble data regarding abnormal charge input, abnormal rotation speed,

abnormal temperature, etc. via each home bus system interface. These portions do not disclose or suggest receiving information on washing condition program settings based on clothes inserted in the washing machine through the communication network, as recited in the claims of the present application. These portions of Kurodo et al. do not disclose or suggest anything related to program settings based on clothes inserted in the washing machine.

Regarding claims 16-18, Applicant submits that these claims are dependent on independent claim 15 and, therefore, are patentable at least for the same reasons noted previously regarding this independent claim.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that none of the cited references, taken alone or in any proper combination, disclose suggest or render obvious the limitations in the combination of each of claims 15-18 of the present application. Applicant respectfully requests that these rejections be withdrawn and that these claims be allowed.

The Examiner appears to reject claims 19-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ginter et al. in view of Kurodo et al. although this is not specifically stated in the Office Action. Further, the Examiner provides no specific details regarding alleged portions of any cited references that discloses any of the limitations in these claims of the present application but merely states that these claims are rejected under Ginter as provided in detail under § 102(e) rejection above, or directed to substantial similar subject matter as rejected above. These are improper §102 or §103 rejections in that the Examiner is required to

specifically identify for each claim and each limitation in the claims where these limitations are disclosed or suggested in the asserted references.

Regarding claims 19 and 23, Applicant submits that none of the cited references disclose or suggest the limitations in the combination of each of these claims. As noted previously, none of the cited references disclose or suggest managing usage of a rental home appliance. Further, none of the cited references disclose or suggest receiving automatically selected information on rental appliance use conditions through the communication network, calculating a charge for use of the rental home appliance if the subscriber number is authenticated successfully, or transmitting the calculated charge to a subscriber's terminal, as recited in the claims of the present application.

Regarding claims 20-22 and 24-29, Applicant submits that these claims are dependent on one of independent claims 19 and 23 and, therefore, are patentable at least for the same reasons noted previously regarding these independent claims.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that none of the cited references, taken alone or in any proper combination, disclose suggest or render obvious the limitations in the combination of each of claims 19-29 of the present application. Applicant respectfully requests that these rejections be withdrawn and that these claims be allowed.

Serial No. **10/029,240**
Reply to Office Action of June 21, 2006

Docket No. **LT-0009**

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that claims 1-29 are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, early allowance of such claims is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned, Frederick D. Bailey, at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
FLESHNER & KIM, LLP



John C. Eisenhart
Registration No. 38,128
Frederick D. Bailey
Registration No. 42,282

P.O. Box 221200
Chantilly, Virginia 20153-1200
(703) 766-3701 DYK/JCE/FDB:tlg

Date: September 19, 2006

\\Fk4\Documents\2031\2031-004\98711.doc

Please direct all correspondence to Customer Number 34610